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(71) Applicant(s)

Bon Bon Buddies Ltd
(Incorporated in the United Kingdom)
Oakwood Close, Penylan Ind Estate, CRUMLIN,
Gwent, NP1 4HY, United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)

Christopher Stuart HOWARTH

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Urquhart-Dykes & Lord
Three Trinity Court, 21-27 Newport Road, CARDIFF,
CF24 0AA, United Kingdom

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(56) Documents Cited

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(54) Abstract Title

Dispenser for confectionery products

(57) A hand-held or pocket-sized dispenser which is arranged to store a stack of flat confectionery products C such as chewing gum comprises a housing 10 having a hollow interior 12 compartment in which the stack is mounted, a leaf spring 17 for biasing the stack towards a top wall 14 of the housing 10, and a dispensing mechanism 18 comprising a slider 19 having an actuator 20 extending through a slot (22, fig 2) in the housing 10 and a barb 21 on the slider which is arranged to engage the uppermost product C in the stack and to push the product C out of an opening 23 in the housing 10 when the actuator 20 is displaced axially of the slot 22. The slider 19 is biased into its non-dispensing position by a coil spring (22, fig 2).

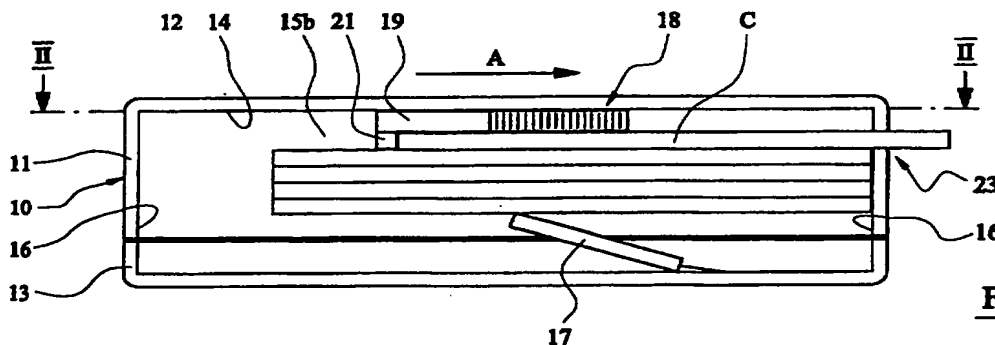
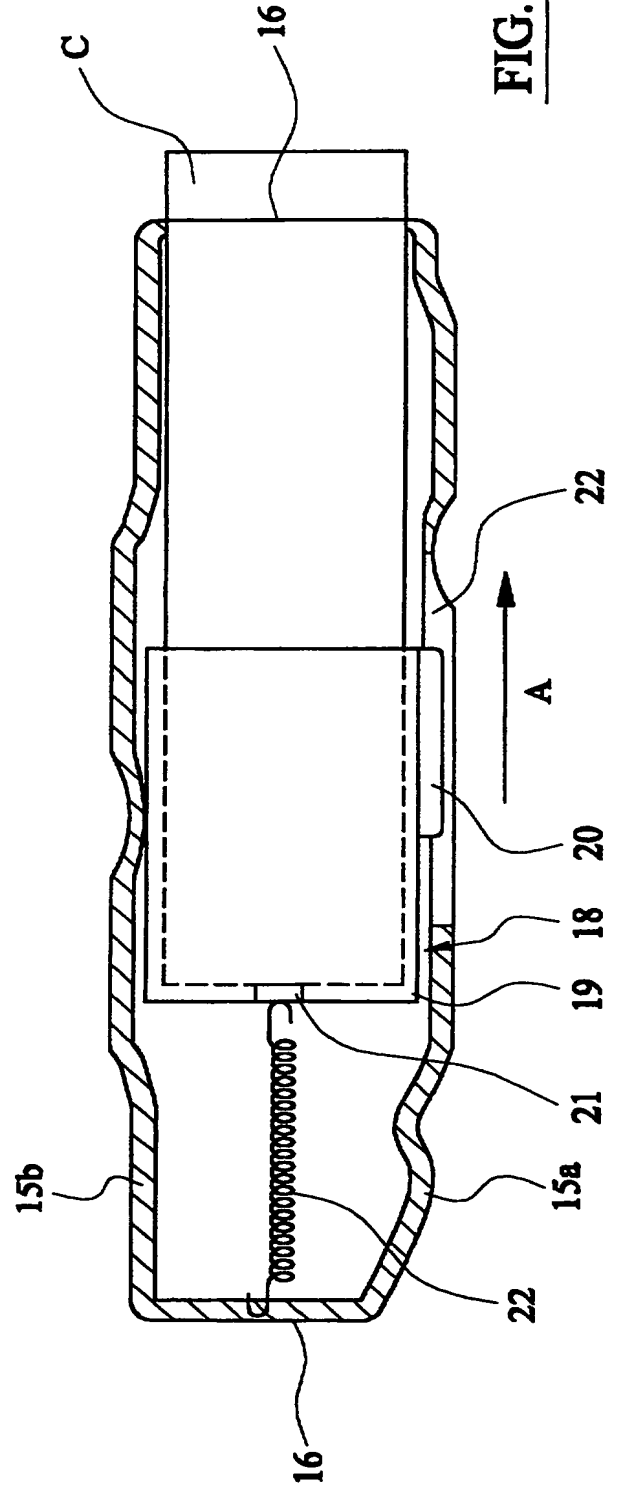
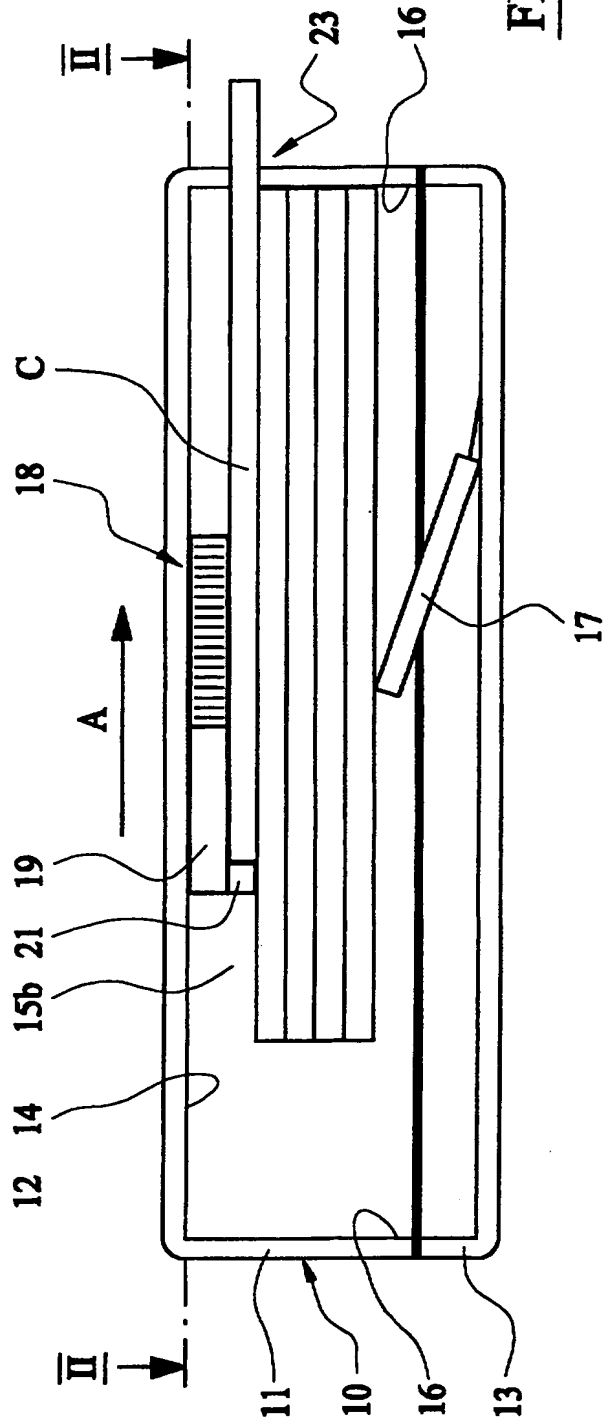


FIG. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date but within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995.

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Confectionery Dispenser

This invention relates to a dispenser for confectionery products such as sweets, candies, chocolate and chewing gum etc.

Children like buying confectionery products, especially when an inexpensive novelty item is provided with the product. Hitherto, although known novelty items attract children to buy the confectionery product, the novelty item serves no useful purpose.

Confectionery often becomes damaged when it is carried around in children's pockets, a particular problem being that the wrapping tends to stick to the confectionery product.

We have now devised a confectionery dispenser which alleviates the above-mentioned problems.

In accordance with this invention, there is provided a dispenser which is arranged to store a stack of flat confectionery products, the dispenser comprising a housing having a hollow interior compartment in which the stack is mounted, means for biasing the stack towards a top wall of the housing and a dispensing mechanism comprising a slider having an actuator extending through a slot in the housing and barbing means on the slider, the slider being arranged such that upon displacement of the actuator axially of the slot, the barb engages the uppermost product in the stack, to push the product out of an opening in the housing.

The dispenser is simple in construction and is thus inexpensive to manufacture, thereby making it affordable for children to purchase a confectionery product including such a dispenser. Furthermore, the dispenser serves to protect the confectionery product against damage.

The dispenser is also attractive for a child to use and thereby encourages children into purchasing the confectionery product.

Preferably the housing comprises a body portion and a cover portion, which can be removed to gain access to the interior compartment, in order to replenish the stack of products.

5 Preferably the cover snap engages with the body portion, thereby preventing the cover from being detached inadvertently.

 Preferably the cover forms the bottom wall of the housing, the body forming the top, side and end walls of the
10 housing.

 Preferably the biasing means is mounted on the cover. Preferably the biasing means comprises a leaf spring.

 Preferably the actuator is slidable between a normal position and a dispensing position, the actuator being biased
15 into said normal position.

 Preferably a coil spring is attached to the slider inside the compartment, the spring serving to bias the actuator into said normal position.

 Preferably the slider comprises a plate slidably
20 mounted inside the compartment against the top wall of the housing.

 Preferably the barb comprises a projection on the plate which projects towards the bottom wall of the housing.

 Preferably the actuator is recessed into a side wall of
25 the housing.

 Also in accordance with this invention there is provided a confectionery product in combination with a dispenser as hereinbefore described.

 Preferably the confectionery product is rectangular,
30 the barb being arranged to engage an end edge of the product to push the product longitudinally of itself through the opening.

 Preferably the product is chewing gum.

Preferably a flexible attachment member such as a chain or strap is attached to the exterior of the housing, so that the dispenser can be carried by the member.

Preferably a keyring is attached to the free end of the
5 flexible attachment member.

An embodiment of this invention will now be described by way of an example only and with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a side view of a chewing gum dispenser in
10 accordance with this invention, with the front side wall being shown removed; and

Figure 2 is a sectional view along the line II-II of Figure 1.

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a pocket-
15 sized dispenser for dispensing chewing gum.

The dispenser comprises a two-piece housing 10 of moulded plastics material having a body portion 10 formed with a hollow interior compartment 12 arranged to store a stack of sticks of chewing gum C and removable cover portion 13 snap-
20 engaged with the body portion 11. The body 11 comprises a top wall 14, front and rear side walls 15a,b and opposite end walls 16 of the housing 10, with the cover 13 forming the bottom wall.

A leaf spring 17 is mounted on the cover 13 to bias the
25 stack of chewing gum sticks C towards the top wall 14 of the housing 10 and against a dispensing mechanism 18 mounted inside the compartment 12 against the top wall 14.

The dispensing mechanism 18 comprises a plate 19 slidably mounted to the top wall of the housing and arranged
30 for displacement axially of the housing 10 between opposite end walls 16 thereof. An actuator 20 projects laterally from one side of the plate 19 through an elongate slot 22 formed in the front side wall 15a of the housing 10. The outer end of the

actuator 20 does not project beyond the exterior surface of the housing 10 and preferably terminates flush therewith.

Normally, the uppermost stick of chewing gum C is biased against the plate 19 and a projection 21 on one end of the plate 19 extends alongside one end edge of the uppermost stick.

In order to dispense a stick of chewing gum C, the actuator 20 is slid along the slot 22 in the direction of arrow A: the projection 21 on the plate 19 now bears against the end of the uppermost stick of chewing gum C and pushes it partially out of the housing 10, through an opening 23 formed in one end wall 16 thereof.

The actuator 20 can then be released, so that a return spring 22 returns the plate 19 to its normal position. The projecting stick of chewing gum C can then be pulled from the housing 10 by hand and consumed.

Once the uppermost stick has been pulled out of the housing 10, the remaining sticks are moved upwardly by the bias of the leaf spring 17, ready for the next stick to be dispensed, as hereinbefore described.

It will be appreciated that the dispenser which has been described is attractive for a child to use but also serves as a means for protecting the sticks of chewing gum prior to consumption.

Claims

1. A dispenser which is arranged to store a stack of flat confectionery products, the dispenser comprising a housing having a hollow interior compartment in which the stack is mounted, means for biassing the stack towards a top wall of the housing and a dispensing mechanism comprising a slider having an actuator extending through a slot in the housing and barbing means on the slider, the slider being arranged such that upon displacement of the actuator axially of the slot, the barb engages the uppermost product in the stack, to push the product out of an opening in the housing.
2. A dispenser as claimed in claim 1, in which the housing comprises a body portion and a cover portion, which can be removed to gain access to the interior compartment
3. A dispenser as claimed in claim 2, in which the cover portion snap engages with the body portion
4. A dispenser as claimed in claims 2 or 3, in which the cover portion forms the bottom wall of the housing, the body forming the top, side and end walls of the housing.
5. A dispenser as claimed in any of claims 2 to 4, in which the biassing means is mounted on the cover portion.
6. A dispenser as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the biassing means comprises a leaf spring.
7. A dispenser as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the actuator is slidable between a normal position and a dispensing position, the actuator being biased into said

normal position.

8. A dispenser as claimed in claim 7, in which a coil spring is attached to the slider inside the compartment, the spring serving to bias the actuator into said normal position.

5 9. A dispenser as claimed in claim 4, in which the slider comprises a plate slidably mounted inside the compartment against the top wall of the housing

10. A dispenser as claimed in any claim 9, in which the barb comprises a projection on the plate which projects towards
10 the bottom wall of the housing.

11. A dispenser as claimed in claim 4, in which the actuator is recessed into the side wall of the housing.

12. A dispenser substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

15 13. A confectionery product in combination with a dispenser as claimed in any preceding claim.

14. A confectionery product as claimed in claim 13, in which the confectionery product is rectangular, the barb being arranged to engage an end edge of the product to push the
20 product longitudinally of itself through the opening.

15. A confectionery product as claimed in claims 13 or 14, in which the product is chewing gum.

16. A confectionery product as claimed in any claims 13 to 15, in which a flexible attachment member is attached to the

exterior of the housing, so that the dispenser can be carried by the member.

17. A confectionery product as claimed in any claim 16, in which a keyring is attached to the free end of the flexible
5 attachment member.

18. A confectionery product substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Claims searched: 1-18

Examiner: Emma Tonner
Date of search: 22 January 2001

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:
UK CI (Ed.S): B8U (UEB)
Int CI (Ed.7): B65D 25/52, 83/08, 85/60: B65H 3/24
Other: Online: EPODOC, PAJ, WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	EP 0 319 046 A2 (MARTINI)	1-6, 9, 10
X	JP 8282748 (TOROIMA)	1-7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15
X	US 5 975 349 (MENES)	1, 2, 3
X	US 5 649 642 (MABRY et al.)	1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15
X	US 4 240 564 (PRITCHARD)	1, 2, 6

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.